



29 September 2006



Chu'sok Holiday Message

1. Chu'sok (translated literally as "autumn evening") is one of two major holidays within Korea; the other being the Lunar New Year. Originated during the time of the ancient Shilla Kingdom to celebrate the beginning of the harvest season, Chu'sok is celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th month on the lunar calendar. This year, Chu'sok occurs on Friday, 6 October with the celebration starting the night before and ending the day after the holiday—making it a four-day weekend for most Koreans.
2. Also referred to as the "Korean Thanksgiving," Chu'sok symbolizes the importance of family in the Korean society. It is a time for families and friends to come together, to prepare traditional foods, and to honor their ancestors both living and deceased. During the celebration, many Koreans return to their home towns in order to visit ancestral grave sites and spend time with their parents and grandparents. Every year, it results in a large migration of people across the peninsula as many Koreans make extraordinary efforts to travel home to be with family members.
3. Within our own CFC and USFK family, we have many Koreans who are an integral part of our formation. They include ROK military service members, Korean Augmentation of the US Army (KATUSA) Soldiers, Civil Service and Korean Government Service (KGS) employees, and contractors who work with us daily to preserve the ROK-US Alliance. Chu'sok is a great opportunity to show our appreciation and respect for their culture and friendship. I encourage all leaders to support the traditions of our host country and allow your Korean military service members and employees the opportunity to take advantage of this holiday period.
4. As an important component of our Good Neighbor Program, I also encourage all USFK Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Contractors to participate in some of the Chu'sok festivities planned during this holiday period. The rituals, customs and traditions are a wonderful testament to an ancient culture, and more importantly, to an important ally. Spend time with your own family or your military family by taking advantage of the beautiful autumn weather and celebrate Chu'sok by renewing the essence of what this Korean holiday is all about—family, respect and camaraderie.

Happy Chu'sok! Jul-Ku-Woon Chusok-Dwae-Sae-Yo!

B. B. BELL
General, US Army
Commander

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